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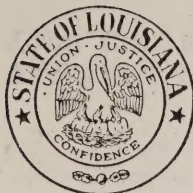
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LOUISIANA ARCHIVES SURVEY

Report No. 2

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

(Under Act No. 381, 1954)



JOHN C. L. ANDREASSEN

and

DR. EDWIN A. DAVIS

Under the Direction of

WADE O. MARTIN, JR.

Secretary of State

May, 1956

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NOTE

This report is based in part upon a careful study of the *Louisiana Archives Survey Report No. 1*, in part on a comprehensive survey of federal and state archives legislation, in part on a study of the National Archives and Records Service, and of the archives and records departments, divisions and historical societies and commissions of the several states, and in part on a study of the now voluminous professional literature on archives, records administration and manuscript work in this country and abroad. This report has been prepared by Mr. John C. L. Andreassen, formerly Louisiana State and Southern Regional Director of the Historical Records Survey, and Director of Administration in the Library of Congress, and Dr. Edwin A. Davis, founder and first Head of the Department of Archives, Louisiana State University, and presently Head, Department of History at that Institution.

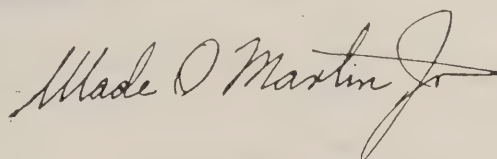
This report is presented in compliance with Section 2 of Act 381 of 1954 which is quoted on Page 1, following.

Both Reports 1 and 2 are based on the conclusion that the Legislature has provided sound general legislation covering (1) the definition of public records (R.S. 44:1), the six-year retention period for records (R.S. 44:36); photo-duplication and microfilming (R.S. 44:39) and access to public records (R.S. 44:31-35); and, on the conclusion that the complexity of the special legisla-

tion relating to records creation, keeping, etc., running throughout the *Revised Statutes of 1950, as amended*, is so great that it is definitely worthwhile to give continuing study to these problems in the best professional sense.

Permit me to summarize findings and recommendations in a single sentence. Louisiana, one of the few states in the Union without an active statewide archives, records administration, and historical program, has sound general archives and records laws on the statute books but it needs a professional group of employees to implement the law, and to apply modern archival and records practices through every level of government in our State and its subdivisions.

My budgetary and legislative recommendation will issue within the next few days in the form of House Bills. I agree with the "findings" and "recommendations" in this Report No. 2 and I want to point out that it is important that the State of Louisiana get an Archives and Records Service Program underway promptly.



Secretary of State

May 1, 1956

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I.

ORGANIZATION AND CONDUCT OF THE SURVEY

Authority

Act 381 of 1954 authorized:

"The Secretary of State to conduct a survey of State, Parish, Municipal, Colonial, Territorial and Federal records with the view to ascertaining the condition, location and availability of such records; to provide for the report of the Secretary of State to the Legislature, of his findings in such survey and his recommendations in regard thereto; to provide that public officers and agencies shall make such records available for such survey; to make an appropriation to carry out the purposes of this Act; and to repeal all laws in conflict herewith."

The sum of \$20,000 was appropriated to carry out the purposes of the act which required all public officers, etc., in custody of such records to make them available for the purposes of the Survey. No problems of access were encountered. The basic provisions of Act 381 are contained in the following two sections:

"Section 1. Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana that the Secretary of State is hereby authorized to conduct a comprehensive survey of State, Parish, Municipal, Colonial, Territorial and Federal records, documents and papers, located within the state and not in current use by the state or any of its departments, boards, public corporations, commissions, agencies, municipalities or subdivisions, with the view of ascertaining the condition, location and availability of such records, documents and papers and their historical and practical significance and value."

"Section 2. That the Secretary of State shall report to the Legislature, at its next Regular Session, in regard to his findings resulting from the survey authorized by Section 1 of this Act, together with his recommendations as to the future assembly, custody, care, disposition and availability to the public, of the records, documents and papers forming the subject of such survey."

Personnel

As Director of the Survey, the Secretary of State appointed, after obtaining the consent of General Troy H. Middleton, president of Louisiana State University, Dr. Edwin A. Davis, Head, Department of History, LSU, and founder and first Head of the Department of Archives, LSU, as Chief Consultant of the Survey. They canvassed the field for an Associate Director of the Survey and on January 1, 1955, the Secretary of State appointed John C. L. Andreassen, sometime State and Regional Director of the Historical Records Survey, and recently Director of Administration in the Library of Congress, to that post. Following conferences with Dr. Davis, Mr. Andreassen, and members of the staff of the Secretary of State's office, a plan of operation was agreed upon, and the Survey was initiated on January 2, 1955.

Plan of Survey

Our best advice, counsel, and judgment, at the initiation of the Survey was that funds, and time available would make inadvisable any general attempt to propose specific records disposition, retention, microfilming schedules; what was called for was an over-all subjective survey based upon as many basic facts as could be ascertained. (We should note that with regard to colonial, territorial and early statehood records, some conclusions were reached on which we have specific recommendations for their assembly, custody, care, disposition and availability to the public.) First of all, how much did the state and its agencies have in the way of records? How far back did they go? What was their present use? Where were they? What was their condition? How accessible were they? What was their present practical or historical significance and value? In brief, how big was the problem, where was the problem and of what did it consist? Too, we attempted to plan the survey in such manner

that its product and by-products could serve archives, records, and research programs of the future as guides and working plans and tools.

From these premises we agreed on the following survey plan. (1) Develop the legal facts with regard to the organization and records law of each major state records creating department, agency, commission, public corporation and board. (2) Survey the records of such offices in East Baton Rouge and Orleans parishes. At this point it should be noted that the unit of measurement used, was in cubic feet. For example, a standard 4 drawer file cabinet holding $8\frac{1}{2}$ " x 11" correspondence was considered to have 8 cubic feet of records. An attempt was to be made to separate out the records of the judiciary because of

the clear jurisdiction of the courts over such records. (3) Compile a "working paper" incorporating such studies. (4) During the same period, a survey of the literature on archival and records administration elsewhere in the several states and the nation was to be undertaken. (5) Make preparation for the survey of the state and local records outside Orleans and East Baton Rouge parishes. (6) Beginning in July, initiate the survey outside Orleans and East Baton Rouge parishes with a completion date set for December 31, 1955. (7) During January 1956, incorporate the results of the "working paper" and the 62 parish surveys into a comprehensive report, on which findings and recommendations could be based.

II.

INTRODUCTION

Operation of Survey

Work was begun on January 2, 1955, and the first five steps in the plan largely had been accomplished and reported in a working paper of 220 pages, one month ahead of schedule, on May 31, 1955. A second "working paper" of 287 pages dealing with the legal history of the less important agencies of the state (records-wise) and with agencies no longer in existence was completed on September 6, 1955. Beginning in July and ending in January, the field survey of records in the parishes other than Orleans and East Baton Rouge was carried on and completed. During January and early February, the two "working papers" and the product of the June to January surveys in the 62 parishes other than Orleans and East Baton Rouge were incorporated into the *Louisiana Archives Survey, Report No. 1, Survey of Public Records*, xxxiv, 461 pp. It forms the basis in part, for this *Louisiana Archives Survey, Report No. 2, Findings and Recommendations*.

Acknowledgments

A great many state and local officials, historians, political scientists and other scholars assisted at various stages of the Survey, as well as many of the state archivists and records administrators in this country. There are a number of out-of-state individuals whose assistance, counsel, or technological advice must be specifically acknowledged. These include: Dr. Solon J. Buck, second archivist of the United States; Dr. Wayne C. Grover, present Archivist of the United States; Dr. Karl Trever, Editor, *The American Archivist*; Dr. Philip M. Hamer, Executive Director of the National Historical Publications Commission; Dr. Clarence G. Carter, Editor and Compiler, *The Territorial Papers of The United States*; Dr. Vernon L. Beal, Archivist and Records Administrator, Michigan Historical Commission; Miss Margaret C. Norton, Archivist, Illinois Archives Division;

Dr. William D. Overman of the Firestone Rubber Company Archives; Dr. Morris Radoff, President of the Society of American Archivists, and Archivist and Records Administrator, Maryland Hall of Records Commission; Dr. W. D. McCain, then head of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History; Mrs. Mary Givens Bryan, Chairman of the State Archives Committee, Society of American Archivists, and State Historian and Director, Georgia Department of Archives and History; Verner W. Clapp, Chief Assistant Librarian, Mr. Donald Holmes, Chief of the Photo-duplication Service, Mr. George Schwegmann, Chief of the National Union Catalog and Mr. Alvin O. Kremer, Keeper of the Collections, Mr. Arthur Fisher, Register of Copyrights in the Library of Congress; Mr. W. J. Barrow, Laminator; and Mr. Robert A. Shiff, Executive Director, National Records Management Council.

Further acknowledgments are included in *Report No. 1*, pp. xxvii-xxviii and xxxiii-xxxiv.

To all these, and many not specifically mentioned, our appreciation is sincerely expressed. The findings and recommendations here presented are, of course, our own.

General:

This introduction should not be considered out of context with the whole *Report*. Louisiana is one of the few states which does not have a well rounded, active, archival, records management, historical, agency. Small parts of the job are presently being done by units of existing agencies, such as the Military Library and Archives unit in the Adjutant General's office, the Department of Archives at LSU, which deals primarily with private manuscript collections, and the Louisiana Historical Society. Some state and parish offices are doing an effective job of records management. It is no criticism of such agencies to point out that in combination these

activities simply do not compare with those of the Alabama State Department of Archives and History, the Georgia Department of Archives and History, the Maryland Hall of Records, the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, the North Carolina Department of Archives and History, the South Carolina Archives Department, the Tennessee Division of Archives or the Virginia Archives Division, most of them established more than a half century ago, and all now engaged in varying degree, in the field of records administration as well as the other related activities of state archival, historical and research work.

It is time indeed that we had a look at our situation in Louisiana. For those who consider historical activity of a state something of a luxury, which it is not in a democracy, the developments, technological and administrative, of the past two decades in the fields of archival and records administration, take it out of any frill category. This will be made abundantly clear in the following pages.

The Federal Government and most of the other states have in the last two decades become acutely aware of the avalanche of paper piling up as a result of legal records keeping requirements, not only in public offices, but in banks and factories, stores and shops, even in the individual citizens' homes. The historical interest of the various governmental historical establishments shifted in the mid-thirties particularly to an interest in identifying and preserving and making known the basic non-current records which were termed archives. The paper deluge growing out of the World War II effort forced a re-thinking of the problem and resulted in the establishment of combined historical, archival and records service programs. For example, our "National Archives" was initiated in 1935, as was the Department of Archives at LSU with its permissive authority to accept state and local archival materials; "The National Records Service" got underway in 1950.

The rule followed in the Survey was to note as non-current those records readily declared to be so by the responsible custodian, and those records so stored or housed as to be clearly in very little or no current use. For a fuller discussion of non-current records see *Report No. 1*, p. xxxi.

Types of Records

We find the records inventoried to be of five general types:

(1) Permanent non-current records of historical value and significance. (The National Archives and Records Service has found after five years experience that less than 25% of all records warrant permanent retention. We estimate that not more than 30% of the records of the state and its subdivisions warrant permanent retention for administrative or historical reasons.)

For example—House and Senate Journals.

(2) Permanent records in current use.

For example—Conveyance Records.

(3) Non-permanent records in current use.

For example—Chattel Mortgage Records.

(4) Little-used records in offices of creation or deposit.

For example—Civil Suit Records.

(5) Non-current records not in use and of no practical value which are legally disposable.

For example—Audited checks of School Boards.

The survey made no attempt to positively identify all records inventoried under these five general types in terms of cubic feet.

Non-Current Records

Most of the records in the 30% of non-current records surveyed (192,475 cubic feet) fall into groups 4 and 5, but this material warrants careful examination before destruction (under present legal authority).

Something over one-half of the 69% of current records (437,743 cubic feet) surveyed would, on careful examination over a period of time, lend themselves to transfer from groups 2 and 3 to groups 1, 4, and 5, according to the experience of the National Archives and Records Service and of numerous states.

Records Surveyed by Louisiana Archives Survey
(in cubic feet):

	Current	Non-Current	Total
State Records	214,020	102,978	316,998
Parish Records	174,761	44,416	219,177
Municipal Records ...	38,652	44,925	83,577
Federal Records	10,310	156	10,466
	437,743	192,475	630,218
	69 plus %	30 plus %	100%

III.

FINDINGS OF SURVEY

In the discussion under this heading, we have followed closely the requirements and language of Act No. 381 of 1954, although this does not lend itself to the brevity of presentation we would prefer under all 13 headings.

(a) Colonial Records 1716-1810

(1803, for all except the Florida parishes)

The French and Spanish and British West Florida Colonial governmental records are largely in other locations than Louisiana and do not come within the purview of this Survey, although as will be noted in *Report No. 1* there are numerous local remnants in Orleans and in some nineteen other parishes. Colonial archival materials still in Louisiana relate largely to records of property in the form of notarial acts, of conveyances, mortgages, successions, suit papers, and marks and brand records. (See for example, *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, Vols. I-XXIX, most every issue of which contains an account of materials in the Presbytere.) Rudolph H. Waldo's guide to *Notarial Archives of Orleans Parish, 1731-1953*, further lists such records. Those in the City Hall Archives of the New Orleans Public Library are almost as readily accessible. Colonial records holdings are indicated in Appendix No. VII, p. 455, of *Report No. 1*, and under the respective parish entries of that *Report* which indicate those in Natchitoches to be the earliest extant. Other guides and descriptions are to be noted in the Historical Records Survey and Survey of Federal Archives publications listed in *Report No. 1*, Appendix No. VI.

The relatively small volume of such records in Louisiana, their condition, and their present dispersion, speak for their reasonable safety in terms of some cataclysmic event such as atomic bombing, but hardly in any other sense.

Our recommendations on the colonial records extant in this state will be found in Section IV.

(b) Territorial Records 1803-1812

With the exception of the records of the Superior Court of the Territory of Orleans, and local court and property records found in New Orleans and some 29 other parish seats, the major group of the Territorial papers of Orleans Territory are in the files of various agencies in Washington including the Department of State, Treasury, War, Interior and Post Office, the files of the Senate and House of Representatives, the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress and the National Archives. (Clarence G. Carter's *The Territorial Papers of the United States*, Vol. IX, *Territory of Orleans* (Washington, G.P.O. 1940, 1092 pp.) makes readily accessible a highly selective group of the extant papers. This work is supplementary to Dunbar Rowland, *Official Letter Books of W. C. C. Claiborne, 1801-1816*. Jackson, 1917, 6 vols., 2478 pp.)

Our recommendations with regard to the Territorial Papers will be found in Section IV.

(c) Federal Records

A branch of a Federal Records Center is maintained on the top floor of the U. S. Custom House in New Orleans. A Federal Naval Records Center is maintained in Algiers. With these and most other Federal records in the State we have considered this survey had no concern. A large body of Federal Records located at the Selective Service System's State Headquarters at Jackson Barracks has been noted in *Report No. 1*, but the disposal of non-current records in this office has been underway during the past year under terms of Federal legislation and regulations.

There are a number of state agencies which operate under a degree of Federal supervision and records control including the welfare, highway, agricultural, conservation, public works, education, geological, labor and certain election

services in Louisiana. However, there is little of apparent consequence to report in this connection other than to note that the question of availability of information about the Employment Security Program has been raised in the press during the past few months. Probably the State has reason to be alert when accepting Federal funds to be sure that there are no unreasonable restrictions on the availability of public records.

The significant point to be brought out is that a considerable body of records of the USDA and the Selective Service System are kept, and staff housed in parish and municipal office space throughout the state. The main USDA agencies involved are the Soil Conservation Service, the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service and the Farmers Home Administration and they have a total of 10,310 cubic feet of records in the parishes.

The Selective Service System has some 1426 cubic feet of records in its headquarters offices and 2785 cubic feet were noted in 40 parish locations.

Our recommendations on Federal Records will be found in Section IV.

(d) State Records

Records of state agencies are located in every one of the 64 parishes. Their distribution is so wide-spread as to be almost unbelievable. Condition of records—ranges from almost non-existence, due to vermin, mold, fire, exposure, war, flood, humidity, faulty paper, poor ink, improper storage, undue use, and human carelessness or disregard to nearly ideal records creation, retention and service, though not always orderly disposition by retirement or destruction under existing law. It is no exaggeration to point out that public offices are now keeping more records than necessary for the effective operation of our various public offices.

However, with regard to certain really basic records, the situation is different. Of the state offices mentioned in the Constitution of 1812, the Supreme Court records have been kept, from that year, and most of the original legislative journals and acts are still in existence and in the custody of the Secretary of State, but—there are no orig-

inal papers of the constitutional conventions before that for 1879 in official custody, although microfilm copies are listed for much of this material located elsewhere, by William S. Jenkins in *A Guide to the Microfilm Collection of Early State Records* (Washington, 1950). The Commission Record in the Secretary's office dates back to 1843, but most other records of the office date back to 1898. The Office of the Attorney General, established in 1812, has records dating from 1914; the State Treasurer from 1860. There are then, serious gaps, some of which can, and must be filled, some of which can never be.

It is clear that much can be done in the way of better records administration in state agencies. The Secretary of State's office and numerous other Departments could benefit from punch card indexing and record keeping, from continuous process photostat recording, from reduction of more bulky permanent records to properly done microfilm for both security and saving of space. Modern records keeping as practiced in the case file records at Charity Hospital in New Orleans, for example, have applicability in numerous other locations, ranging through most of our state institutions.

While these generalizations are undoubtedly true, these things should not be done on a piecemeal basis. In our view, we have need for the promulgation of certain standards in these fields, and for some experimentation in the areas where greatest benefits could be derived in the shortest time, with the lowest expenditure of funds. There is much more to records administration than these things, of course, ranging from the creation of a record to its ultimate disposition. The items mentioned are intended to be merely indicative of areas where important starts can be made.

Our recommendations with regard to state records will be found in Section IV.

(e) Parish Records

Report No. 1 lists location of parish records in considerable detail. No problems of availability of such records were noted as far as the Survey was concerned, although there have been a few instances when the Public Records Act has been involved in recent months. Few parish courthouses house all the local records any more,

although by and large, parish courthouses are safer and more commodious than at any time in the state's history. There are, however, some serious exceptions.

Certain notable developments have occurred in some parishes with regard to recording and indexing in the clerk of courts' offices. Where the volume of business warrants it, a half dozen clerks now have continuous processor photostatic equipment to record most materials except chattel mortgages. In several parishes in the western portion of the state, recording is done daily by microfilm camera, and the microfilm is blown up to record page size daily by a Texas photoduplication firm. In only one parish, East Baton Rouge, is indexing of the basic records done by printing and cumulating indexes from punch cards. The implications here are that all documents requiring recording could be done in any courthouse where the volume of material to be recorded warrants the capital outlay for the photostatic equipment. Any parish, not having that volume of business could well record daily on microfilm and receive back, page size photostats for pole binding within 48 hours from a central laboratory at the State Archives and Records Center. The negative microfilm could be deposited for purposes of security in another location than the original record.

The same efficiency could be attained by indexing with punch cards. About all that would be called for in the offices would be a key punch machine, which is no more complicated than the typewriter and the index pages could be printed daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually, etc., by a centralized tabulation unit. Our recommendations on these matters are to the effect that the time has come for some experimentation in this field on a limited basis, with state-wide recommendations to follow after the experiments.

Another major problem needing further study is that of duplication to quintuplication of certain parish records. It should not be necessary to keep in one courthouse, even one vault, the original suit papers and the recorded suit papers. It should not be necessary to keep the original conveyance, mortgage or other notarial act as well as the recording of that act. It should be possible to decide on which set of the assessment or tax

rolls should be kept in perpetuity, and where they should be kept. This is a matter for discussion with numerous state and local officials and the local bar associations, of course.

There is such body of law, judicial decisions, attorney general's opinions *et cetera* on these matters that much more study and consultation is called for and no doubt some clarification through legislation. We do find that this is an area where real relief in the matter of space in courthouses could be given, in time. Further intensive study is called for by a State Archives and Records Service.

Our recommendations will be found in Section IV.

(f) Municipal Records

Municipal Records are, except in the smaller municipalities, so widely dispersed as to make an inventory of them, a strenuous task indeed. New Orleans and Baton Rouge municipal records locations noted in *Report No. 1* are clearly indicative of this. The total bulk of such records is obviously substantial. Of all the 238 incorporated municipalities, only New Orleans has an archives department, and that department apparently is not receiving all of the city's non-current records at present.

Our recommendations will be found in Section IV, and in Section V.

(g) Special District Records

In 1951, there were some 801 special districts in Louisiana, many with records outside the usual state or parish office buildings. Only the major districts were surveyed, but the records total is substantial (3,298 current, 5,110 non-current, total 8,408 cubic feet). Of course, certain of the basic records of many districts will be found in the *proces verbaux* series in the office of the Secretary of State, the stored records of the State Auditor, the records of the State Bond and Tax Board, and in the records of the respective police juries, and school boards, assessors, and sheriffs and *ex officio* tax collectors.

It would appear that over the years, many of these special districts will go out of existence when

functions for which they were created have been accomplished and obligations met. Here is a complicated "no man's land" of local government, made more so by lack of a State Archives and Records Service to effect centralized deposit of the minute book records and other basic records of these districts and their respective boards.

Our recommendations on this type of records material will be found in Section IV.

(h) Condition of Records

We find, with regard to the condition of the records of the state and its subdivisions that so many have been lost, due to climate, vermin, insects, war, flood, fire, human error or carelessness, that something more than legislation and penalties, are called for if we are to preserve the essential records of this state and its subdivisions for better day to day administration, and the preservation to posterity of the records of the past and of our own time. We find, however, that records are being better kept today than they were two decades ago. We find that there is a recognition of the necessity to provide more adequate housing for records in many of the offices surveyed. We find that in office after office there is a conscientious effort to improve records keeping practices and conditions. When it is all said and done, the state and its subdivisions are the custodians of the records guaranteeing the security of the individual, of the family. They are responsible for the deed, the mortgage, the succession, the marriage, the divorce, the birth, the death, the mark and brand, the military service, the corporation, the tax, the professional registration, the employment, the retirement, the old age pension, the health, the welfare, the safety, the educational, the civil, the criminal, the registration, the election, the traffic, the transportation, the communications, the insurance, the research records of the individual citizen from birth to death, and such records in a democracy help guarantee liberty, security, freedom for the individual, the family and the group.

We find it reasonable that assurance should be given to all our citizens that these guarantees to their freedom, liberty, security are well and uniformly cared for and efficiently serviced. Should the deed record to a friend's home in a

nearby parish be less secure against vermin, humidity, fire or theft, than the deed to my home, simply because of a difference in economic and technological developments in the two parishes?

(i) Location of Records

We find with regard to the location of the records of the state and its subdivisions, that they are so widely distributed, as to make their location and effective utilization by public officials, the legal profession, the general public and researchers most expensive, time consuming and difficult. It is very often prohibitive in terms of cost, to government officials, attorneys, the citizen, research scholars, genealogists, to find the required record in time.

(j) Availability of Records

We find with regard to the availability of records, that public officials generally make their records available under the law which is a reasonable one indeed to both public official and private citizen (R.S. 44:31-35). However, location of records, and lack of public knowledge of, and guides to records series and locations, makes accessibility of some considerable quantity of records most difficult. Too, an official responsible for day to day operation of an office seldom has time, space, facilities to effectively serve the attorneys, scholars, genealogists, the historians in the manner an archival establishment would, at lower cost. There were even a few records which our agile surveyor was unable to view during the course of the survey. Certainly the Historical Records Survey inventories and *Report No. 1* will aid the searcher in the future, but he will still have to travel long distances at considerable cost.

(k) Historical and Practical Significance of Records

With regard to the historical and practical significance of the records of this state, and its subdivisions, it is clear on the face of this Survey that 30% of the records now held in one location or another have little or no practical day to day administrative use. It is clear, from the Federal experience to date that not much more than 25% of the Federal records in existence are of any permanent value, historical or otherwise.

It would appear from these findings that something between the 30% of Louisiana's records not now in use, and the 75% of Federal records acknowledged to be without permanent practical or historical value is the point at which we should stop the elimination of records of no practical or historical value. We find that 30% of Louisiana's records are clearly disposable insofar as any current use in present locations is concerned; up to 75% may well be.

With particular reference to the historical significance of the records of our state and its subdivisions, we find that there is very little of our colonial, territorial, ante-bellum and Confederate records still extant which should not receive the most careful identification, preservation, care and service. We are as well convinced that early attention must be devoted to the surviving records of the period of Reconstruction, if for no other reason than lessons they hold for our own time. Some considerable quantity of the records of the colonial, territorial and early statehood periods is available elsewhere, and these should be systematically collected and made available on microfilm for further study into our state's origins and development.

(1) Some Comparisons

The hodge podge of activities carried on by the great variety of other states' historical, archival, records agencies make tabular comparisons of not too great value. This is made abundantly clear in Mary Givens Bryan, *Comparative Study of State and U. S. Territorial Laws Governing Archives*, (Atlanta, 1955). There is one aspect, the organizational location of an archives and Records Service, to which we have given considerable thought. Just where should it be located in the State's organizational pattern?

In some states the State Historical Society operates such services, as in Wisconsin; in others, an independent department of archives and history carries on such functions as in Alabama, Mississippi, and North Carolina; in other states such as Virginia, Illinois and Tennessee these services are provided under the auspices of a State Library, which in Illinois is under the Secretary of State. In Georgia, the Department of Archives and History is under the Secretary

of State; in South Carolina, the Archives Department recently has been placed under an Archives Commission; in Michigan the Historical Commission is charged with Archival and Historical activities, and its Archivist has been designated Records Administrator as well, however, records management appropriations actually go to the Department of Administration.

All these states are doing a most respectable job in the archives and records management field, yet the diversity in their organizational set-up is quite great. We can only conclude that the historical developments in the several states has been different, and that once a State has decided to support an effective archival and records management program, the place it is situated in the State government doesn't make too great difference. In the case of the Federal government, the National Archives was set up originally as an independent agency; for the last half dozen years, the National Archives has been a part of the General Services Administration.

We have suggested that these functions be placed in the office of the Secretary of State simply because (1) that officer is historically the State's chief records officer and (2) any new agency would benefit from the central administrative services already established. There is no reason the function could not be assigned to the State Library, or be placed under the general direction of the Board of Supervisors of Louisiana State University, or be an independent agency.

The Federal program is a bit more clean-cut, and as a result of the two Hoover Commission studies and the work of the National Archives and Records Service, is becoming more so. Now what, basically are the Federal arrangements? First of all—printed materials and documents go to the Library of Congress which serves all agencies of the government, as well as the public. Second, the museum activities of the National Government are largely concentrated within the Smithsonian Institution and its subdivisions. The Art exhibits are largely concentrated in the National Gallery. Park and historical sites and markers activities are largely concentrated in the National Park Service. Archival activities have, since 1935, been concentrated in the National Archives, which since 1950 has also operated the Records Service.

Here, in Louisiana, we have our State Library, our State Law Library and our system of University and College Libraries to handle printed materials, we have our State Museum with its various historic buildings and collections in New Orleans, the State Park and Recreation Commission with parks and historic buildings and museums elsewhere, our state Exhibits Building, under the Department of Agriculture and Immigration in Shreveport, our Art Commission with its gallery in the Old State Capitol. The matter of Historical Markers is handled by the Department of Commerce and Industry. LSU, since 1936, has had a Department of Archives with permissive authority (R.S. 17:1542) to collect state and local archival material, something which it did through 1938, but has not done since.

In Louisiana, reasonable provision has been made for all except a State Archives and Records Service, which the National Government and a majority of the states have provided for in one form or another.

It has been suggested (though we cannot subscribe to the idea whole-heartedly) that Louisiana's delay in setting up an historical, archival, and records service means that at least we have no serious mistakes, other than loss of much valuable material, to correct. Today it is possible to start something here, with the knowledge that most of the trial and error in methods and techniques of archival and records work have been worked out by others. Today it is possible to outline certain basic principles and objectives in these fields and to suggest benefits that follow, and at what cost and at what saving.

(m) Some Dollar Findings

Now one thing we must point out is that the literature on this subject of archives and records administration has very often emphasized the dollar and cents aspect. We do not deprecate that approach, and will, of course, use it here. However, there is more than day to day dollar savings involved in proper records and archival administration and the dollar should not be over-emphasized. There is the preservation of our historical heritage, the preservation of the evidence of the individual and the group rights and privileges of the citizens of this state, and some of these things

we do not measure in terms of the dollar sign or any other comparable symbol. After viewing the holdings of all major and many smaller records-producing agencies of the state and its subdivisions during this survey certain dollar findings can and should be made.

In terms of standard size 4-drawer file cabinets, it would require 78,777 file cabinets to hold all the 630,218 cubic feet of records surveyed. If all these 4-drawer file cabinets were placed side by side, they would form a line 98,471 feet long or $18\frac{2}{3}$ miles of file cabinets, 51 inches high. Placed in one building without any aisle space and with drawer handles removed, they would require 222,151 square feet of floor space. Say they were all put in one building which had enough space to open the drawers, in order to give service on the files, the building would have to have some 500,000 square feet of floor space.

Actually some 30% of all those records are not now in active use, but are creating fire hazards, are cluttering up offices, vaults, jail cells, cellars, attics, warehouses, using the equivalent of 30% of 500,000 square feet, or 150,000 square feet of space. Assume for a moment, that such space averages out at a cost per year of \$1.00 per square foot, and the cost of keeping records beyond their useful life becomes pretty obvious. Actually the average rate per foot paid by 258 Louisiana State agencies for 243 offices for 376,563 square feet of space in 1953 was \$1.292 per square foot. (See *Report to the Legislative Council No. 7*, Oct. 29, 1953, p. 16.)

We must point out that the cost per square foot of the really non-current records storage of something like one-half of the remaining state records in "marble hall" office space is, of course, considerably higher.

Now, let us assume that the greater portion of presently acknowledged non-current records are in standard size file cabinets—such a file cabinet costs an average of \$83.51. There are 192,475 cubic feet of such non-current records in the equivalent of 24,059 file cabinets which at \$83.51 each, have a replacement value of \$2,009,667.09. If all those records were kept in paper boxes costing 11¢ per cubic foot instead of the \$10.43 per cubic foot, the steel cabinet storage costs, it would

be worth some effort to release the file cabinets for use in current record keeping.

In these two examples, we have dealt with space and file cabinets only for the clearly non-current records. There are, of course, again as many records which could in time, be identified as non-current, and could receive this kind of safe but lower cost care and service.

There are other cost factors than space. These include such things as the cost of searching for a record in a mass of other records when one-half to two-thirds of them should have been

earlier discarded; the cost in time to the individual citizen when indexes are inadequate, when the mass of useless records delays the finding of what is significant.

(n) Conclusions

All this seems to add up to the obvious necessity of doing something about 1) our historical records, 2) our little used records and 3) our obsolete and useless records at every level of our state and local government now. Our general and specific recommendations compiled in keeping with Act 381 of 1954 follow.

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IV.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the discussion under this heading, we have followed closely the requirements and language of Act No. 381 of 1954.

(a) Assembly

We recommend with regard to the archives of the state and its subdivisions that provision be made for centralized deposit of such non-current historical records in the original or in photocopy, for preservation, for security against loss, and for research use.

We recommend with regard to the little-used records of the state and its subdivisions that provision be made for centralized low-cost storage of them until they can be legally disposed of if they have no material research value.

We recommend that after careful evaluation of little-used records of the state and its subdivisions, and approval of their destruction under appropriate law, rules and regulations, such records be destroyed and/or disposed of under approved schedules, *in situ* insofar as it is possible.

(b) Custody

We recommend that until a central Archives and Records Center facility becomes available, such public records generally should remain where they are, but that when such facility becomes available they should be placed in the custody of an Archives and Records Service under appropriately approved records retirement schedules to be worked out between the Service and the designated records officer of each agency of the state and its subdivisions. Where there is sufficient local use of a body of records, they should not be transferred to a central Archives and Records Center, except in the form of copies such as microfilm copies, for research and security reasons.

(c) Care

Director

We recommend that the Secretary of State, ~~through the proposed Archives and Records Service,~~ and with the approval of an Archives and Records Commission, issue rules and regulations under law, setting up appropriate specifications for materials and methods to be used in records creation, keeping, recording, and care, and that counsel and service be afforded the officials of the state and its subdivisions in the matter of records care and administration. We recommend further that the ~~Secretary of State through the Archives and Records Service~~ provide a centralized repair, lamination, fumigation, and photoduplication service and issue the necessary rules and regulations governing such services to state and local agencies.

(d) Disposition of Records

R.S. 44:36 as revised by Act No. 134 of 1950 and Act No. 473 of 1954 dealing with the preservation of records "other than conveyance, probate, mortgage or other permanent record required by existing law for all time" for a period of 6 years (other than those of the Department of Revenue which may be destroyed after five years) should not be changed at this time.

Our studies have brought out that more than 75% of the pages of the five volumes of the *Revised Statutes of 1950* as amended have records creation, filing or keeping requirements. As a by-product of the Survey, we have organized the legal materials for a careful examination of each record series kept by any office of the state and its subdivisions, and these studies should be used to work out records destruction schedules by the Archives and Records Service, and the respective records keeping officers directly involved. If, and when, the law is found to require the retention of unneeded and useless materials, this would be brought to the attention of the Legislature for remedial action.

wherever possible for the better service of the bar, the individual citizen, the scholar, the genealogist and the public administrator.

(8) Instruct the Service to map out a plan of scheduling all records of the state and its subdivisions for (a) permanent retention, (b) archival deposit, (c) records center temporary retirement or (d) destruction in accordance with law—and in those instances when law and common sense seem to be in conflict, to recommend to you proposed improvement of the law. On approval of the plan, by the Archives and Records Commission, instruct the Service to work with state and local records officers in carrying it into effect at the earliest possible time.

(9) Instruct the Service to work with the Judicial Council in effecting a reduction in space requirements for the judicial records of the State and its subdivisions.

New Orleans Notarial Archives

There is one area in the field of public records in Louisiana that has defied solution since Colonial days. This is the matter of notarial records in Orleans, and it affects surrounding parishes. An over-simplified statement of the problem is, that notaries keep their records until they resign or die. At no time in the past generation has any custodian of the Notarial Archives been able to obtain all the notarial records or care for them when they were due to be deposited, under law,

much less inspect the legally required fire-proof facilities each notary is required to maintain. We propose no ready solution to an age old problem. We do suggest that the time has come for representatives of the bar, the notaries, the public officials concerned, and of the general public, to sit down and discuss the problems involved. We would propose, under the authority of the legislation presented, to have such a group organized, with a view to working out some reasonably satisfactory recommendation to the Legislature for the earliest possible consideration.

The Bomb

You will note that we have not dealt with the problem of the preservation of the records of the state and its subdivisions in the event of atomic or hydrogen bombing. To take those steps necessary to provide such safeguards would require capital and operational outlays far in excess of those proposed. Furthermore, until our records house is in better order, it would be wasteful of funds now. If, however, the military, or our top political leaders had urged such action now, we would have presented such proposals at this time. This brief note is merely to indicate that during the course of the Survey we have not been unaware of the calculated risks involved. We have seen little or nothing from the Federal authorities suggesting action on this matter at this immediate time.

